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TAGS: PREL PGOV HAID ECIN UNGA

SUBJECT: IRISH AID OFFICIALS: IRELAND SHARES U.S.

HOPES/CONCERNS ON HLE

REF: A. DUBLIN 1097

1B. STATE 160880

1C. STATE 162146

1D. STATE 162169

¶11. (SBU) Summary: Ireland shares U.S. hopes for a successful UN High-Level Event (HLE), as well as U.S. concerns about the development portion of the HLE outcome document, Ronan Murphy, Director General of Ireland's aid agency, told the Ambassador and DCM on September 7. Murphy said that aid recipients' responsibilities on governance would be a key negotiating point in the outcome document and that governance was an increasingly significant issue for the GOI aid program, as demonstrated by a recent symbolic reduction in Irish assistance to Uganda. He also noted that Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Ahern would focus his September 14 HLE speech on increased Irish funding for HIV/AIDS and for emergency/famine response, initiatives that the GOI hoped to coordinate with the USG. End summary.

Ireland Shares U.S. Hopes on HLE

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¶12. (SBU) Ireland shares the United States' hopes for a successful UN High-Level Event and a meaningful outcome document, Ronan Murphy, Director General of Development Cooperation Ireland (DCI, the overseas aid agency within the Department of Foreign Affairs) told the Ambassador and DCM during a September 7 discussion on reflets' demarche points. Murphy noted that the GOI, like the USG, had concerns about the development chapter of the outcome document, particularly its excessive length (a view expressed by GOI officials in previous demarches, per ref A). The GOI was also dubious of proposals for an International Financing Facility (IFF) that might be discussed at the HLE, though Ireland did not object to countries participating in innovative financing arrangements voluntarily. Overall, the GOI was disappointed with lack of progress on the outcome document. Murphy cited recent correspondence from the Irish Mission to the UN, however, suggesting better prospects for agreement on the document, specifically, the manner in which the draft might refer to the Millennium Development Goals.

Ireland's New Focus on Governance

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¶13. (SBU) Aid recipients' responsibilities on governance are an increasingly significant focus for the GOI, said Murphy. He noted that DCI would soon publish a white paper on official development assistance (ODA) strategies for the next six years, a paper that would include, for the first time, a chapter on governance. He added that the GOI, having allocated euro 546 million to ODA in 2005, needed to reassure the public that funding would not be wasted because of governance/corruption problems. As an example of the GOI's seriousness on this issue, DCI had reduced aid to Uganda from euro 32 million to euro 30 million in 2005 to signal Irish dissatisfaction with President Museveni's leadership. "For lack of a stick in that case, we decided to cut off part of the carrot," said Murphy. He also observed that agreement on the development chapter of the HLE outcome document depended largely on efforts to find common ground on the draft's references to governance.

The Prime Minister's HLE Speech

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¶14. (SBU) Murphy remarked that Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Bertie Ahern's September 14 HLE speech would outline Ireland's overall approach to assistance, including a new timetable for Ireland to fulfill its commitment to allocate 0.7 percent of GDP to ODA. (Per ref B, Ireland's ODA now stands at 0.4 percent of GDP; at the 2000 Millennium Summit, Ahern had committed Ireland to reach 0.7 percent of GDP for ODA by 2007.) Murphy noted that Ahern's speech would focus on increased funding to combat HIV/AIDS, an initiative that the GOI hoped to coordinate with the office of U.S. Global Aid Coordinator Randall Tobias. The speech will also highlight Irish funding for emergency/famine response, which Conor Lenihan, Minister of State for Overseas Development,

intended to discuss more fully with USAID Administrator Natsios in a planned September 15 meeting in New York. The Ambassador and DCM cited Ireland's rapid response and effectiveness in several ongoing UN peace-keeping missions and encouraged Murphy/DCI to build on that experience in working with other countries to address future emergency situations.

BENTON